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Washington, D.C.-Today, Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-04) issued the following statement recognizing December 1, World AIDS Day:

Today marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day, to recognize the magnitude of this pandemic and reflect on the challenges and successes of the global fight against AIDS. On this day we are reminded that we must do more as individuals, communities, and as a nation to reduce the harm caused by HIV/AIDS.

There are 33 million people living with AIDS around the world today, half of whom are women. Globally there were 2 million children living with HIV/AIDS, and an estimated 15 million AIDS orphans. A quarter-century after the discovery of HIV, UNAIDS estimates that it has claimed more than 25 million lives. The tragic impact of AIDS is felt everywhere from Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to two-thirds of people living with HIV/AIDS, to at home in the United States where every 9 minutes someone becomes newly infected with HIV.

Our nation must remain vigilant in preventing HIV infection and transmission and help developing countries treat infected persons and care for children affected by AIDS. I am deeply proud that the United States has established itself as a global leader in the AIDS fight with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The new Congress has thus far committed more than \$10 billion—the largest amount ever—to AIDS prevention and relief around the world. To truly honor the courage of all those now living with AIDS, and the spirits of all those who have lost their lives to it, the U.S. must keep and expand its promise to lead. This year Congress passed the *Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act* (H.R. 5501) which was signed into law to increase PEPFAR funding to \$50 billion over the next five years. It also includes a substantial boost in HIV/AIDS programming related to women and

girls.

We can and have made progress in the fight against AIDS. PEPFAR has supported the prevention of an estimated 152,000 infant infections; the provision of mother-to-child HIV transmission services for women during more than 10 million pregnancies; care for nearly 6.7 million people, including more than 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children; and counseling and testing services for over 30 million people. These are not just numbers that prove that this is a global epidemic; these are numbers that show we have solutions, and we cannot let a lack of resources stave off the progress we have made in the fight against AIDS.

We also must continue to address the critical problem of HIV/AIDS and need for resources in the United States. There are over 1.2 million individuals living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S. One fourth of these people are unaware of their infection, and racial and ethnic minorities represent 70% of new cases. A recent report by the CDC shows that there are 56,000 new HIV infections each year, 40% higher than prior, less accurate estimates. For this reason we need to rededicate ourselves to the need for education, prevention, awareness, stigma reduction, and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, and strengthen key programs that provide access to care and support to people with HIV/AIDS.

With the new Administration and new Congress our global and national response to AIDS must be informed by the lessons we've learned from the evolution of this epidemic. Only then will we be able to achieve the global goal of significantly expanding access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

Today, on World AIDS Day, we honor the struggles and courage of all those who are living with AIDS. We also remember those who have lost their fight by continuing the battle against AIDS all year round. AIDS can be slowed, and one day stopped, if we all take responsibility and leadership to meet the challenge.